

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

October 31, 2022

2. Department

Forestry and Fire Protection

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Communications Office

4. CEA Position Title

Deputy Director, Emergency Incident Awareness

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose.
(2-3 sentences)

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) requests to retitle an existing Career Executive Assignment (CEA), Level B, as the Deputy Director of Emergency Incident Awareness. The position serves as the principal policymaker responsible for managing, directing, providing leadership, and developing and implementing policy relative to external communications, press/media relations, social media, public-facing website, video production and graphic design, publishing services, public outreach, and education. The position regularly responds to emergencies and wildfires of all types and sizes and spends a considerable amount of time in the field at all-hazard emergency incidents providing critical leadership, oversight, and direction. The position is expected to function in the capacity of an active-duty firefighter and first responder and perform critical functions to support emergencies, including acting as the primary liaison to the dignitaries, key stakeholders, and the media. The position provides executive level coordination and collaboration on the relative topics with the Governor's Office, the California Natural Resources Agency, other State departments, and other key stakeholders.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Director/Exempt

7. Relationship with Department Director (Select one)

- ☒ Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- ☐ Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(Explain):

8. Organizational Level (Select one)

- ☐ 1st ☒ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

Under general direction of the Director of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the Deputy Director of Emergency Incident Awareness exercises significant independence and decision-making authority relative to managing the Department's Communication Office.

The position serves as the principal advisor to the Director, Chief Deputy Director, and State Fire Marshal, as well as the Governor's Office and the California Natural Resources Agency, supporting executive level policy and decision-making on matters related to external communications, media and press relations, social media, the Department's public facing website, video production and graphic design, publishing services, and public outreach and education to meet the mission, business needs, and objectives of the Department. The Deputy Director regularly responds to emergencies and wildfires of all types and sizes and spends a considerable amount of time in the field at all-hazard emergency incidents providing critical leadership, oversight, and direction. The position is expected to function in the capacity of an active-duty firefighter and first responder and perform critical functions to support emergencies, including acting as the primary liaison to the dignitaries, key stakeholders, and the media. Responsible for conducting local, national, and international media interviews on the fireline or on emergency incidents and articulating emergencies and disaster management, providing credibility on behalf of CAL FIRE.

The position plans, organizes, and directs the Department's public information and external communications activities; develops and implements a strategic communication plan for the Department, including planning, organizing, and directing the news and outreach functions to engage stakeholders and ensure that they are fully informed of the relevant policies and programs of the Department. As an integral member of the the Executive Team, the position regularly advises and consults with the Director, Chief Deputy Director, State Fire Marshal, Deputy Director of Legislation, and other members of the Department's Executive Management Team, as well as the Governor's Office and the California Natural Resources Agency, to provide pre-policy communications input and top provide post-policy implementation and dissemination strategy.

The Deputy Director oversees all media relations (including social media platforms and messaging) and acts as the primary point of contact for all press inquiries and outreach. The position develops and implements policy dissemination strategies, including establishing information program objectives tied to goals. Coordinates the handling of issues and policies that are highly sensitive, controversial, and complex; are subject to a high degree of scrutiny by the public, the media, and the State Legislature; and have significant impact on stakeholders and the State.

The Deputy Director oversees the maintenance of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's public-facing website and social media platforms; manages video production, graphic design, and publishing services for Department programs; develops and publishes internal and external messaging that communicates the Department's key policy positions and activities; and records and analyzes all communications-related statistics and other data.

The position develops and maintains critical partnerships with the media, other local, state, and federal agencies, and community stakeholders to further shared media advocacy goals. It also leads internal and external teams to implement statewide marketing and education campaigns and emergency response communications and coordinates closely with other agencies and organizations, including the Governor's Office, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Office of Emergency Services, legislators' offices, local government, community organizations, and other external stakeholders.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- ☒ Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- ☐ Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- ☐ Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The mission of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is to serve and safeguard the people and protect the property and resources of California. The Communications Office helps the Department to fulfill this mission by ensuring that critical fire and emergency response information, as well as important fire prevention education and messaging, is accurately and timely disseminated to the public, the media, the Governor's Office, the California Natural Resources Agency, cooperating agencies, and critical stakeholders.

The Communications Office carries the Department's message across multiple forums and to a variety of audiences and provides information and education to people of all ages in public forums, through the media and the worldwide web, and through the display of printed material.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection currently has a CEA B position that serves as the Deputy Director of Communications. However, due to the nature of the work and the close connection to the Department's emergency response mission, the Department has experienced difficulty in filling the position at an appropriate salary level commensurate with the high level of responsibility of the position. The position works closely with the Department's fire protection operations and regional offices, must have fire line training and experience, as it regularly responds to emergencies and wildfires of all types and sizes, and oversees a Statewide communications program staffed with uniformed firefighter positions that do the same. As such, it is critical that this position be uniformed to recruit a candidate who has extensive knowledge and experience in wildland firefighting and emergency response, that is only gained through employment with a fire department.

In recent years, California has experienced some of the most devastating fire seasons on record due to climate change, record-breaking drought and unprecedented tree mortality. This is expected to continue. As with any large-scale catastrophic incident, media interest is extremely high on both large fires as well as during the initial stages of wildfires that impact communities. The position spends a significant portion of its time in the field, responding to emergencies and performing critical functions to support those emergencies, including acting as the primary liaison to the media.

The position must clearly understand the operational aspects of an incident to ensure that media access in no way interferes with firefighters' efforts to contain and control an incident, and, more importantly, that the media are kept out of harm's way. As such, the Department feels that the title "Emergency Incident Awareness" more aptly describes this position and is requesting the title change and minor reorganization to balance staff between this position and the existing Exempt Deputy Director of Strategic Communications, Education, and Outreach.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The CEA B is a member of the Department's Executive Management Team, and the incumbent regularly provides significant advice and recommendations to the Director, Chief Deputy Director, and the State Fire Marshal, as well as the Governor's Office and the California Natural Resources Agency, on policy issues relative to the external communications, media relations, social media, the Department's public facing website, video production and graphic design, publishing services, and public outreach and education to meet the mission, business needs, and objectives of the Department.

As the largest emergency response organization in the State, the Department deals with major incidents (fires, medical emergencies, mudslides, floods, pipeline breaks, etc.) on a daily basis. In the midst of some of the most challenging fire seasons on record, the need for information from the public, the media, the Governor's Office, the Legislature, the California Natural Resources Agency, and stakeholders is critical. That information must be accurate and timely and reflective of the Department's critical mission to protect the people and resources of California. The Deputy Director of Emergency Incident Awareness is responsible for all Department policy regarding the dissemination of information, relations with the press/media, the use of social media, and education of the public. When lives, property, and critical and sensitive natural resources are threatened by wildfire, the demand for accurate and timely information is tremendous and comes from many different sources. How that information is disseminated, when and where it is disseminated, and to whom it is disseminated are all critical to the Department's operations and to the recipients of that information and are determined by the policies developed and maintained by this position.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The Deputy Director (CEA B) advises and provides support to the Director, Chief Deputy Director, State Fire Marshal, and the Department's Executive Management Team, as well as the Governor's Office and the California Natural Resources Agency, in ensuring that critical communications policies and strategies are developed and followed during major emergency incidents and relative to other important State and Department initiatives, including fire prevention education, emergency preparedness, wildfire and forest resilience, and wildfire prevention and mitigation.

This CEA represents the Department as its main spokesperson to the public and news media and acts as the liaison with the press offices of the California Natural Resources Agency and the Governor's Office.

The position functions with a high degree of independence, working directly with the Exempt Deputy Director of Strategic Communications, Education, and Outreach, Deputy Directors, Assistant Deputy Directors, Region Chiefs, and Assistant Region Chiefs on all matters relative to external communications, press/media relations, social media, the Department's public facing website, video production and graphic design, publishing services, and public outreach and education to meet the mission, business needs, and objectives of the Department.

As the Departmental expert on all matters relative to external communications and press/media relations, the position takes the initiative in recommending policy directives to ensure the State's statutes and regulations are implemented and followed.

The proposed position provides annual reports of accomplishments relative to the Department's communications strategies, as well as regular and consistent statistical information on wildfires and other emergency incidents to the California Natural Resources Agency, the Legislature, the Governor's Office, the media, the public, and other federal, state, and local stakeholders.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The CEA develops and implements new policy in the areas of external communications, media and press relations, social media, the Department's public facing website, video production and graphic design, publishing services, and public outreach and education to meet the mission, business needs, and objectives of the Department, as well as updating policies and procedures as necessary. Just as the Department's response to emergencies evolves with the number, type, and severity of the emergencies, so too do its communication strategies and policies. This position provides advice to the Director, Chief Deputy Director, State Fire Marshal, and the Executive Team, as well as the Governor's Office and the California Natural Resources Agency in the development, interpretation, and administration of communications related policies.